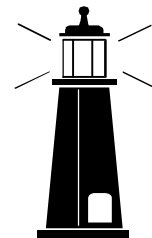


The Beacon



DoD DOE EPA FEMA FBI HHS

NATIONAL DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS OFFICE BEGINS OPERATIONS

NATIONAL DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS OFFICE (NDPO)

In 1996, with the increase in terrorist activity against American targets both here and abroad, Congress passed the Defense Against Weapons of Mass Destruction Act. This legislation, better known as the Nunn-Lugar-Domenici (NLD) legislation after its sponsoring Senators, is designed to enhance the capabilities of our nation to effectively respond and manage the consequences of potential terrorist acts involving the use of WMD.

Congress designated the Department of Defense to lead the Domestic Preparedness Program (DPP) outlined in the legislation that would provide basic training, exercises and other assistance to first responders and senior officials in 120 cities across the nation.

At the same time, another training program, made available by coincidental legislation, began to emerge. The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which also passed in 1996, called for the development and delivery of training for fire and emergency medical personnel for the response to weapons of mass destruction. Other independent programs have also been produced.

On August 27-28, 1998, stakeholders representing the nation's first responder community recommended to Attorney General Janet Reno that these and other terrorism training and assistance programs be coordinated by a single lead federal agency. On October 16, 1998, Attorney General Reno announced that the Department of Justice, through the FBI, will coordinate all domestic preparedness matters through the National Domestic Preparedness Office (NDPO) in partnership with other federal, state and local agencies that have relevant authority, jurisdiction or expertise in this area.

NDPO MISSION

The NDPO will serve as a clearinghouse for information on training programs and a hub for the development of other national assistance initiatives. The NDPO will be staffed by state and local representatives through memorandum agreements, as well as participating federal agencies, including, but not limited to, FEMA, EPA, DOE, NRC, HHS, and DoD. In addition, an advisory group of state and local representatives from various response disciplines will be assembled to periodically review and counsel the NDPO.

At the recommendation of the stakeholders, the NDPO will provide coordination in the areas of training, exercises, equipment, research and development, and information and intelligence sharing. The objective of the NDPO is to have local, state and federal personnel participate in each of these areas, according to their respective areas of expertise.

NDPO NEWSLETTER

One of the ways the NDPO hopes to better coordinate and standardize domestic preparedness across the country is through the dissemination of a monthly newsletter, called THE BEACON. This newsletter will be made available to federal, state and local first responder agencies through their local WMD Coordinators. THE BEACON will report on WMD related issues as they come to light through the NDPO, particularly those issues having a direct impact on first responders.

THE BEACON will also provide the latest information available on training and equipment, as well as upcoming WMD exercises scheduled throughout the country. In addition, THE BEACON will keep first responders apprised of the most recent terrorist threats and trends, using actual case examples whenever possible. The NDPO hopes that recipients of THE BEACON will also provide their insight and any information, comments, suggestions or concerns to the NDPO to be published in later issues of THE BEACON. This essential input will assist the NDPO in making THE BEACON a more effective means of communicating directly with first responders.

The ultimate success of the NDPO will be measured by its ability to integrate the knowledge and expertise of first responders around the country into a coordinated response effort which will adequately address the threat of a WMD incident in any given city in the United States. Surely, the subsequent fruits of this success will be witnessed by the many lives saved when well trained and prepared first responders arrive on the scene of what we hope will be only the rarest of WMD incidents.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS OFFICE

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